GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3688
ANSWERED ON:13.12.2000
UTNTOUCHABILITY IN THE COUNTRY
SUBODH MOHITE

Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether untouchability is still in practice in many forms through out the country;

(b) if so, facts thereof;

(c) whether the matter has been brought out to the notice of the Government by National Commission of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and other institutions;

(d) if so, details thereof; and

(e) the action taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SMT. MANEKA GANDHI)

(a)to(b) No Sir, The practice of untouchability is rather non existent in some States/UTs,namely, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim,Tripura, West Bengal, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Chandigarh Admn., Daman & Diu, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, and Lakshadweep. However, it exists in parts of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Goa,Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir,Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh,Maharashtra, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi and Pondicherry.

(c)&(d) National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes has informed that it brings out details in its various Reports indicating the number of cases registered under the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 which relate to the practice of Untouchability. As per the provisions of the Act, untouchability cases are registered by the Police and challaned in the Courts after investigation. Special Courts have been set up for trying the cases under the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 and the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes

(Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989.

(e) Following steps have been taken for enforcement of the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 in an effective manner.

(i) Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme, Central assistance is provided to the StateGovernments on 50:50 basis and to Union Territory Administrations on 100% basis for measures undertaken by them which include the provision of adequate facilities including legal aid, the appointment of officers for initiating or exercising supervision over prosecution, setting up of Committees and Special Courts, conducting periodic surveys and identification of untouchability prone areas.

(ii) State Governments, where pendency of cases, is high, have been requested to establish exclusive Special Courts for expedious disposal of cases registered.

(iii) Implementation of the Act was reviewed in a meeting of the State Secretaries ofScheduled Castes Development and Social Welfare Department held in Febuary, 2000 and the State Secretaries were requested to take necessary action forimplementation of the Act.

(iv) Chief Secretaries of States/UTs have been requested by the Secretary, Ministry ofSocial Justice and Empowerment on 24.2.2000 for ensuring effective implementation of provisions of the Act and polices as also the delivery of services and justice to the victims and target group.

(v) Minister of State for Social Justice & Empowerment has requested the ChiefMinisters of all States/UTs on 2.8.2000 to take effective steps for implementation of the Act.